



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 16 June 2020 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
J A Hale
P K Jones
G J Tanner

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
D W Helliwell
E T Kirchner
T M White

Councillor(s)

L S Gibbard
T J Hennegan
W G Lewis

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley
P R Hood-Williams

L R Jones
J W Jones

Also Present:

Councillor R C Stewart Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

Officer(s)

Craig Gimblett Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager
Kate Jones Democratic Services Officer
Brij Madahar Scrutiny Team Leader
Martin Nicholls Director of Place
Phil Roberts Chief Executive
Ben Smith Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
Debbie Smith Deputy Chief Legal Officer

132 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interest was declared:

Councillor C A Holley - personal - Minute Nos. 88 – Daughter works for Social Services.

133 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

134 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 9 March 20 and the Minutes of the Special Scrutiny Programme Committees held on the 24 April 20 and 4 June 20 be approved as a correct record.

135 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

136 Council Response to COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy, the Chief Executive, the Director of Place, the Chief Finance Officer and the Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager were present for the Committee's consideration of the Council's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Leader provided a presentation which included: -

- Decision making structure during the crisis
- Rapid redesign of council services
- Supporting our NHS
- Expanding Social Care
- Supporting key workers
- Supporting vulnerable people
- Helping the homeless
- Test Trace Protect
- Meeting the cost of Covid-19

Questions and discussions with the Leader and Officers focused on the following:

- Emergency planning arrangements – Joint working, Strategic command arrangements and South Wales Local Resilience Forum
- Necessary support for asylum seekers and refugees – overcoming restrictions on payments and being able to tailor food packages to suit needs
- No recourse to public funds – an issue buy had not inhibited ability to provide local services to those in need
- Resources needed / potential ongoing requirement for food parcels following the crisis
- Ongoing economic concern and increasing needs
- Homelessness – potential increase during and following the crisis, discussion around refusal to take offer of housing and the Council's 'Housing First' and wrap around support
- Partnership working specifically with business during the crisis and in terms of recovery planning
- City Deal Programme – work has continued and remains ongoing and Welsh Government funding remains unaffected by the crisis
- Lease issues regarding the Bay field hospital which may affect its future use as additional health capacity

- Impact of increased working from home on services and staff – balance benefits of home working with health, safety and wellbeing. Felt to be particularly useful for regional working but recognise limitations
- Review of agile and home working policies and looking at lessons learnt from this period
- Re-commencement of litter picking and recycling centres and impact of restrictions on service
- Financial implications of COVID-19 with both increased costs as well as lost revenue – recovery of costs from Welsh Government
- Ongoing resource / cost for Test, Trace, Protect
- Effect on income from fees, charges and council tax
- Importance of tourism for recovery planning and generating income from tourism – support for tourism
- Improvements and increased engagement with the environment – lessons to be learnt from the crisis
- Action plan for climate change
- Traffic in city centre – investment into metro network and active travel preferred to consideration of congestion charge
- Continued use of the volunteers who have helped the city during the crisis

The Leader outlined his thanks to all Staff, Volunteers, Key Workers, NHS, Councillors, Corporate Management Team, Chief Executive and many others who have worked tirelessly throughout the crisis

The Chief Executive outlined his thanks to all staff and the corporate management team who have all gone above and beyond, working tirelessly to deal with the crisis and maintain services. He also expressed his thanks to the Leader noting the continued progress with the city centre developments alongside dealing with the current crisis.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, outlined his thanks to all staff, the corporate management team and the Leader for the hard work undertaken in responding to this national crisis. He also expressed his thanks to all the Volunteers who have helped across the city.

Resolved that the Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Leader, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

137 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair presented a report on 'Scrutiny Letters'.

The report was **noted**.

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm

Chair